

## Department of Veterans Affairs

## § 20.700

Such motions must specifically identify which expenses charged are unreasonable; must set forth the reason, or reasons, why such expenses are excessive or unreasonable; must be accompanied by all evidence the claimant or appellant desires to submit; and must include a signed statement certifying that a copy of the motion and any evidence was sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the representative. Such motions must be filed at the following address: Office of the Senior Deputy Vice Chairman (012), Board of Veterans' Appeals, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. The representative may file a response to the motion, with any accompanying evidence, with the Board at the same address not later than 30 days following the date of receipt of the copy of the motion and must include a signed statement certifying that a copy of the response and any evidence was sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the claimant or appellant, setting forth the address to which the copy was mailed. Factors considered in determining whether expenses are excessive or unreasonable include the complexity of the case, the potential extent of benefits recoverable, whether travel expenses are in keeping with expenses normally incurred by other representatives, etc. Once there has been a ruling on the motion, an order shall issue which will constitute the final decision of the Board with respect to the motion.

(e) In addition to whatever other penalties may be prescribed by law or regulation, failure to comply with the requirements of this section may result in proceedings under §14.633 of this chapter to terminate the attorney's or agent's right to practice before the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5904)

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900-0085)

[57 FR 4109, Feb. 3, 1992, as amended at 57 FR 38443, Aug. 25, 1992; 67 FR 36105, May 23, 2002]

§§ 20.612–20.699 [Reserved]

### Subpart H—Hearings on Appeal

#### § 20.700 Rule 700. General.

(a) *Right to a hearing.* A hearing on appeal will be granted if an appellant, or an appellant's representative acting on his or her behalf, expresses a desire to appear in person.

(b) *Purpose of hearing.* The purpose of a hearing is to receive argument and testimony relevant and material to the appellate issue. It is contemplated that the appellant and witnesses, if any, will be present. A hearing will not normally be scheduled solely for the purpose of receiving argument by a representative. Such argument should be submitted in the form of a written brief. Oral argument may also be submitted on audio cassette for transcription for the record in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section. Requests for appearances by representatives alone to personally present argument to Members of the Board may be granted if good cause is shown. Whether good cause has been shown will be determined by the presiding Member assigned to conduct the hearing.

(c) *Nonadversarial proceedings.* Hearings conducted by the Board are ex parte in nature and nonadversarial. Parties to the hearing will be permitted to ask questions, including follow-up questions, of all witnesses but cross-examination will not be permitted. Proceedings will not be limited by legal rules of evidence, but reasonable bounds of relevancy and materiality will be maintained. The presiding Member may set reasonable time limits for the presentation of argument and may exclude documentary evidence, testimony, and/or argument which is not relevant or material to the issue, or issues, being considered or which is unduly repetitious.

(d) *Informal hearings.* This term is used to describe situations in which the appellant cannot, or does not wish to, appear. In the absence of the appellant, the authorized representative may present oral arguments, not exceeding 30 minutes in length, to the

## § 20.701

Board on an audio cassette without personally appearing before the Board of Veterans Appeals. These arguments will be transcribed by Board personnel for subsequent review by the Member or Members to whom the appeal has been assigned for a determination. This procedure will not be construed to satisfy an appellant's request to appear in person.

(e) *Electronic hearings.* When suitable facilities and equipment are available, an appellant may be scheduled for an electronic hearing. Any such hearing will be in lieu of a hearing held by personally appearing before a Member or panel of Members of the Board and shall be conducted in the same manner as, and considered the equivalent of, such a hearing. If an appellant declines to participate in an electronic hearing, the appellant's opportunity to participate in a hearing before the Board shall not be affected.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7102, 7105(a), 7107)

[57 FR 4109, Feb. 3, 1992, as amended at 58 FR 27935, May 12, 1993; 61 FR 20450, May 7, 1996]

### § 20.701 Rule 701. Who may present oral argument.

Only the appellant and/or his or her authorized representative may appear and present argument in support of an appeal. At the request of an appellant, a Veterans Benefits Counselor of the Department of Veterans Affairs may present the appeal at a hearing before the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7102, 7105, 7107)

[58 FR 27935, May 12, 1993]

### § 20.702 Rule 702. Scheduling and notice of hearings conducted by the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, DC.

(a) *General.* To the extent that officials scheduling hearings for the Board of Veterans' Appeals determine that necessary physical resources and qualified personnel are available, hearings will be scheduled at the convenience of appellants and their representatives, with consideration of the travel distance involved. While a Statement of the Case should be prepared prior to the hearing, it is not a prerequisite for a hearing and an appellant may request

## 38 CFR Ch. I (7-1-03 Edition)

that the hearing be scheduled prior to issuance of the Statement of the Case.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7102, 7105(a), 7107)

(b) *Notification of hearing.* When a hearing is scheduled, the person requesting it will be notified of its time and place, and of the fact that the Government may not assume any expense incurred by the appellant, the representative or witnesses attending the hearing.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7102, 7105(a), 7107)

(c) *Requests for changes in hearing dates.* (1) The appellant or the representative may request a different date for the hearing within 60 days from the date of the letter of notification of the time and place of the hearing, or not later than two weeks prior to the scheduled hearing date, whichever is earlier. The request must be in writing, but the grounds for the request need not be stated. Only one such request for a change of the date of the hearing will be granted, subject to the interests of other parties if a simultaneously contested claim is involved. In the case of hearings to be conducted by the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, DC, such requests for a new hearing date must be filed with: Director, Management and Administration (01E), Board of Veterans' Appeals, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420.

(2) After the period described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section has passed, or after one change in the hearing date is granted based on a request received during such period, the date of the hearing will become fixed. After a hearing date has become fixed, an extension of time for appearance at a hearing will be granted only for good cause, with due consideration of the interests of other parties if a simultaneously contested claim is involved. Examples of good cause include, but are not limited to, illness of the appellant and/or representative, difficulty in obtaining necessary records, and unavailability of a necessary witness. The motion for a new hearing date must be in writing and must explain why a new hearing date is necessary. If good cause is shown, the hearing will be rescheduled for the next available hearing date